

Standards Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: April 23, 1998

Attending: Belinda Collins (OSS/TS) Chair, Ellyn Beary for William Koch (CSTL), Howard Bloom (MEL), Bruce Fie for John Mayo-Wells (EEEL), Carroll Croarkin (ITL), Cita Furlani (ATP), Roger Kilmer (MEP), and Albert Lee (Program Office), Al Parr (PL), George Quinn (MSEL), Mike Hogan (ITL), Neville Pugh for Stephen Carpenter (OIAA), Joel Zingeser (BFRL); **OSS staff:** Walter Leight, JoAnne Overman, Maureen Breitenberg, Krista Johnsen Leuteritz, Joan Tyler; **Other attendees:** Ray Kammer (NIST Director), Paul Doremus (Program Office); **SAC members absent:** Lanse Felker (OQP)

SAC meeting was opened by Belinda Collins. After introductions, the special guest, NIST Director, Ray Kammer, provided remarks.

Remarks by the Director (Ray Kammer)

Ray has been meeting with major standards development organizations, (ASME, ASTM, IEEE , etc.) to better understand current standards issues. It appears that the “Europeans have been eating our lunch”, that product testing in the EU is a real challenge for the U.S. The major SDOs are developing a strategy for working with ISO, to define “what is an international standard.” ASME recently “tested the waters” by introducing performance-based standards at the ISO.TC11 meeting held in Tokyo. ASME and ANSI both strongly agree that the U.S. must have an international strategy for standards, ASTM leadership is re-thinking its position and is coming onboard.

It had been suggested that ANSI should think of new methods for handling intellectual property, such as would ANSI be willing to buy standards? Ray said he would like to see a financial mechanism for ANSI to offset any money they might lose if they gave up income from sales of standards. An appropriation might be passed by Congress if the top 20 SDOs supported the concept.

Ray spoke of the conference with standards development organizations scheduled for September 23 in Washington, to be sponsored by DOC (and perhaps co-sponsored by ANSI), with participation from Secretary Daley.

Ray noted the importance of accreditation and the timeliness of National Council for Laboratory Accreditation (NACLA).

Ray mentioned three challenges:

1. Maintaining a strategy for dealing with the EU
2. Product Certification (requires infrastructure)
3. As the EU acts strategically, we need to act more strategically - are we (NIST) participating where we should in the standards arena? *This is the challenge for SAC.*

The SAC engaged with Ray in the following questions and answers :

1. Given that SAC has proposed a process and a strategy with desired outcomes - any reaction?

Answer: Get consensus, propose it to E-board - they understand that product standards are more important than they used to be.

2. How are we, as an agency, supposed to respond to the new legislation (P.L. 104-113)?

Answer: Let the Interagency Committee on Standards Policy (ICSP) be the sounding board.

3. There is a serious problem in the international community, it is pleading with the U.S. to get its act together, agencies are going in different directions, very uncoordinated (for example USTR, ITA, USDA, etc.); is anything being done?

Answer: I recognize the problem, if the SDO's come together in a coherent fashion that will help. We need a U.S. strategic approach, a NIST strategic approach and we need to understand what our inter-agency role is.

4. We often hear that participation in documentary standards activities is not valued at NIST; comments?

Answer: "I outlined 5 things that I would like to accomplish, they are all important, the 2nd focuses on standards."

5. Will precluding serving on standards boards hurt us?

Answer: "Yes, but with liaison status, you can still provide council. If a supervisor is willing to grant leave, this might be an alternative. Anything beginning with TC is acceptable; committee work is acceptable."

6. Do you see any solutions to this dilemma?

Answer: "If there was a law that says you must be there, that would be the solution. This will not be on any legislative agenda this year; however, Connie Morella may attach something next year."

7. What about countries which cannot afford to buy U.S. standards?

Answer: There are no solutions on the horizon, but there is money in the budget (4M) for training.

There was some discussion on how ANSI membership should be re-constituted, having more members come from profit-making companies. The Information Technology (IT) field seems to have figured out a different approach to standardization and it appears to be working: "IT got there first!" The Department of Transportation has contracts with various SDOs (at least 5) to write a suite of standards to support intelligent highway systems.

Strategic Standardization at NIST

Moving to the topic of strategically managing standards at NIST, Belinda Collins stated that Ray had given the SAC its marching orders. She reviewed questions brought up at the special session held on standards management back in February. What is our strategy for working on standards activities?

What are the new standards areas? What about the ongoing standards work: is it still valid? How do we strategically plan and use our staff and resources? Belinda asked for SAC reactions to the papers sent to them on the topic of Strategic Standardization at NIST.

Howard Bloom thought the content was helpful and that using the priority-setting criteria established by Prabhakar and Good provided an appropriate level of guidance. He said he was leaning toward having a NIST policy of common elements with OU-specific plans. MEL recently completed an exercise in planning and prioritizing its work. Divisions within MEL were requested to analyze their programs, then provide a breakdown of time spent in three categories: research, measurement services and standards activities. He stated that each of the divisions, all working independently, came back with similar outcomes: 70% of time spent on research, 18% spent on measurement services and 12% spent on standards activities.

Walter Leight thought it might be an interesting exercise to go back several years (perhaps 10) to compare the SAMI database then with the current database to see the differences. Could indeed be revealing!

Mike Hogan made the point of NIST participating in technically sound standards for the U.S. Why are we participating in particular standards? He suggested that a template for standards projects or for elements of projects might also be appropriate. In other words, what applies, can we provide a list of relevant standards activities linked to the work we perform?

Joel Zingeser made the point that because of who we are (NIST), we need to know certain facts, we need to effect real change in the way we conduct business.

Carol Croarkin asked “who sets policy”? Perhaps the first order of business is to have a NIST Standards Policy, then address each item in the Template.

Howard Bloom stated that each OU has a customer base with known standards activities, but what other technical needs of U.S. industry should or could NIST support? We may be missing effective ways to support standards activities, hence Technology Services might launch an initiative to learn what U.S industry thinks NIST could or should be doing in the standards arena.

Al Parr pointed out that not all OU’s handle standards activities in the same way: sometimes standards activities are driven strictly by personal interest. There is a real need to develop common standards management practices at NIST.

Cita Furlani suggested that OU’s might help ATP-funded companies identify their standards needs, ascertain a level of effectiveness, then help the companies attain that level.

Peter Heydemann suggested forming a small group to work on a NIST standards policy. Once the policy has gained consensus, it could be presented to the E-board. He recommended leaving detailed standards planning activities to the OU’s, believing that MEL’s work on their Standards Roadmap (mentioned earlier by Howard) could be an addendum.

Belinda asked for volunteers to serve on a committee to write a policy for NIST standards activities. The following SAC members will serve on the committee: Howard Bloom, Belinda Collins, Carol Croarkin, Peter Heydemann, Mike Hogan and Al Parr

The committee is to consider what Ray said today and try to fit his remarks into the SAC's strategic thinking about standards activities.

It seems that standards activities and standards writing are being elevated to a different level. We are no longer talking only about "just standards writing, or how to measure trace elements," but a strategy to address both notions.

It was pointed out that the Lab council plan should fit with the needs identified by the SAC.

Presentations were made by two OSS staff members. JoAnne Overman informed the group that the SAMI database is virtually online now and is in beta test mode. SAC members are invited to help test and will be notified when the testing is complete. JoAnne also provided information about a NIST-wide license for access to ANSI's NSSN, a national resource for global standards via the Internet. The NSSN provides bibliographic information on U.S. industry and military/federal, international, and foreign standards, both approved and drafts. It does not include full text, but provides links to SDO Home Pages and to designated resellers for ordering information. NIST's subscription includes an alert service for 50 profiles. The service will notify NIST whenever a change or new development occurs in a specific subject area. The Standards Information Program will administer the alert service for NIST and requests assistance in selecting subject areas. JoAnne provided a hardcopy document explaining the NSSN along with the form for activating the NIST standards alert service. The readily accessible Internet address is:

<http://nist.nssn.org>.

Maureen Breitenberg presented information on "Guidance On Federal Conformity Assessment (CA) Activities." She summarized NIST responsibilities required by P.L. 104-113, which designates NIST as "federal coordinator for government entities responsible for CA activities," thus eliminating "unnecessary duplication of CA activities." Maureen noted that the Congressional House Record of 2/17/96, HR 2196 "Requires NIST to coordinate among federal agencies, survey existing state and federal practices, and report back to Congress on recommendations for improvements in these activities." Maureen also discussed how the NIST implementation plan defines how NIST functions will be carried out. Other background information on CA gave SAC members a sense of how CA fits into the work of various standards activities across the campus.

Belinda adjourned the meeting, saying that the small policy group will convene a meeting very shortly and get back to SAC members on results.

Action Item List:

Krista Johnsen Leuteritz

- Work with Centennial Committee relative to SAC input (ongoing)
- Will conduct workshop on standards participation and NIST policies for new employees (1/2 day - 9/98)

Overman

- Put SAMI database on-line (in beta test, completion is imminent)

Tyler

- Develop and publish success stories (or failures) about standards development as a NIST-IR, using Technical Highlights and the Update as a starting point (ongoing)
- Contact Bob Chapman about a presentation of a priority-setting tool (5/98)
- Establish and chair task group to identify a suite of IT tools to support standards-related activities at NIST - also related to strategic standards management processes (5/98)

OSS

- Convene a meeting of the standards policy sub-group
- Investigate standards policy and technical standards position at NIST
- Will conduct a general workshop on “what OSS does” (1/2 day)
- Provide input on NIST view of the economic benefits gained from its standards participation
- Provide additional information on “dues/fees” for standards-related activities

SAC Members

- Provide input to OSS (Tyler) on the Strategic Standards Management framework/plan
- Provide information to OSS (Tyler) for the publication of the Success Stories
- Provide suggestions on topics for future discussion (ongoing)

OU Assignments:

- Put standards-related activities on home pages; link to OSS homepage